

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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BUDDHIST LEADER INVITED TO VATICAN COUNCIL

Nikkyo Niwano, head of Rissho Koseikai, a "new" Buddhist organization whose membership grew from a handful about thirty years ago to the present 2 million, left for the Vatican on September 11 to attend the first week of meetings of the Second Vatican Council when deliberations will be centered on the theme "Religious Freedom."

The invitation to attend the Council as a special guest was received by Niwano in August and marks the first time for a Buddhist to receive such an invitation.

At a press conference held at the organizations's huge, mosque-like headquarters in Tokyo, Niwano said that he was invited to go as the representative of an active Buddhist sect and that he had suggested that the Soka Gakkai be considered, if an "active" organization was the criteria, but that the Vatican headquarters did not consider the Soka Gakkai to be a religion. Another reason that he was invited, according to Niwano, was that he had previously made the statement that all religions should "unitedly cooperate" for world peace and happiness and that this had attracted attention. "I have also previously stated that in the final analysis Buddhist and Christianity are one in truth, and that the failings of Christianity can be met by Buddhism and the failings of Buddhism can be met by Christianity, to fulfill the happiness of man," he continued.

He also noted that he was not too enthusiastic concerning the invitation at first, because it appeared to be an effort of the Vatican to obtain information on Japan's religious picture in order to bolster lagging Catholic evangelism in Japan. However, he was now convinced that his own convictions had been recognized and that he was being given an opportunity to talk with Catholic leaders concerning his belief that truth is one and the same. He felt that Catholicism was undergoing an "invisible revolution" and moving toward reconciliation with "heathen faiths."

NIHON KIRISUTO KYOKAI (PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED CHURCH IN JAPAN) TO MEET

The Nihon Kirisuto Kyokai, known in English as the Presbyterian and Reformed Church in Japan, will meet for its 15th General Assembly on October 6 - 8 to consider plans for its 100th anniversary in 1972 and other matters.

Also to be considered at the meeting is the stepping up of a pension system for retired pastors from the formerly planned year of 1969 to January, 1966. The pension will amount to 5,000 yen (about \$14) a month.

Another matter to be deliberated is the change of its English name from Presbyterian and Reformed Church in Japan to the Church of Christ in Japan. The reason for this change is not content but rather due to the fact that the Church is being referred to by this latter name by Churches in other lands.

The Nihon Kirisuto Kyokai is not a member of the Japan NCC, although representatives of the Church have met with NCC officers and the Church has expressed a desire to be a member of the WCC. Reasons given for unwillingness to join the Japan NCC are that the NCC includes other than Churches in its organization and therefore is not a "pure" council of Churches, it receives aid from foreign Churches and there are "strings attached", it does not express its position clearly on Church government, and does not place much emphasis on evangelism.

III. D. ASIAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE PREPARATIONS AND FOLLOWUP

Preparation for the 3rd Asian Christian Women's Conference (ACWC), to be held July 15-27, 1966 in Japan, is proceeding with the publication of the pamphlet "Activities of the World Church and I" by the Women's Committee of the Japan NCC and the scheduling of a study meeting on the Church in Asia, on October 15-16, also under the sponsorship of the Women's Committee.

The informational pamphlet will be used as a text for the study meeting being used for general distribution to women of the church. The publishers of the pamphlet hope that it will help bring about a better understanding of the ecumenical movement and of the function of the ACWC.

The pamphlet traces the beginning of the ACWC from 1958 when a meeting was held in Hongkong with representatives of nine nations present (India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan and Hongkong) to foster greater understanding of the "Fellowship of the Least Coin," which had been initiated in 1956.

The second meeting of the ACWC was held in Thailand four years later in 1962 whereas the first meeting was sponsored by The Presbyterian Church in the United States, the second gathering was sponsored by the East Asia Christian Conference. Thirteen countries were represented by about 800 delegates, Burma, Ceylon, Malaya, as well as Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand being added to the countries represented at the first meeting.

It is hoped that more countries may participate in the third meeting and thus as a result Asian men and women can better share and participate in the task of the Christian home, the Church and Society.

Plans are to hold a consultation for three days immediately following the ACWC, according to J.S. Quiambao, Secretary of the EACC Committee on Men and Women Cooperation. The site of the Consultation will also be on the International Christian University campus and the theme is to be "Asian Men and Women Seek New Ways of Christian Fidelity."

every convenience in accordance with our purpose and requests. We herewith give heartfelt thanks to those brothers in America for their friendship and cooperation.

Nowwithstanding the wall which lies between us is thick. We must admit this fact as well. In particular we could not help being disappointed at their too-simple anti-communism attitude and their anti-Red-China stance. We were also disappointed by their too-self-justifying understanding of liberty and democracy, their ignorance of the actual situation in Vietnam, their lack of understanding of Asian problems and finally, their over-swollen sense of responsibility towards international politics, and their implicit approval of "power politics." We could not help feeling the wide discrepancy between our views and theirs.

On the other hand, however, we saw and heard with our own eyes and ears that strong criticism and protest against the American Vietnam Policy is now increasing among the intellectual people. In spite of painstaking efforts on their part, however, we felt that we could not expect too much of them right now. But as many Americans as we had opportunity to visit gave attentive ear to us and told us in turn that through our visit they had come to devote greater interest and thought to this ever-pending problem. Sensible people are now concerned about how to talk their government into putting an end to the Vietnamese War as soon as possible. We have shared this concern with them, not as on-lookers but as fellow participants; and prayed, thought and acted with them.

We have done what we could. We have been supported throughout by the prayers and encouragement of our fellow Christians back in Japan, who, in sincere prayer for peace in Vietnam also prayed for us. We have run our course the best we could. We do not know how much we have done, but this we will have to commit to God. Of one thing we are sure, however. That is, that we are commanded to serve our Lord even in the realm of politics, that the present Peace Mission has been sent out as a result of obedience to this command, and that the sending out of this Mission will be long remembered in the ecclesiastical church history of our country as an epoch-making event.

Finally, we affirm that the present action is the start, rather than the termination of our effort. We must renew our determination and strengthen our unity to continue our efforts till the day peace returns to Vietnam, and further, till the day peace comes to the world.

August 15 in the Year of Our Lord 1965 Isamu Omura, Sekikazu Nishimura,
Mitsunori Yamaguchi, Yoshiaki Iisaka
Natsue Nonomiya

CHURCHES COOPERATE IN EVANGELISM

The churches of the city of Urawa, located north of Tokyo in Saitama Prefecture, cooperated with evangelist Koji Handa in organizing the Urawa Gospel Crusade held September 7-11.

The United Church of Christ in Japan, The Free Gospel Church, the Presbyterian and Reformed Church in Japan, the Reformed Church in Japan, the Nazarene Church, the Baptist Convention, and several independent churches, all located in Urawa, worked together in distributing leaflets, hanging up posters, outfitting and running a car equipped with loud speakers and organizing a choir.

The united effort has been a source of great joy to those participating. Although there have been several churches in the city for many years, there had never been much fellowship among them.

The holding of the crusade in Urawa was at the request of Mr Ono who had attended the Tokyo Gospel Crusade last fall and accepted Christ at that time. Mr. Ono died only three months after his baptism, but had requested that a Crusade be held.

Speaking simply of men's sin and of salvation in Christ, Rev. Honda met with much response from the capacity audiences of about 500 on each of the five nights.

JAPANESE PEACE MISSION REPORT

The team of Japanese Christians which went to the United States on July 20 and for three weeks traveled about the States, sharing their concern for peace in Vietnam, have reported their impressions of the tour at various meetings called for this purpose. One of these reports was made at a public meeting at the Ginza Church in Tokyo.

Rev. Isamu Omura, chairman of the peace team, reported at that time that the purpose of the visit was not to oppose U.S. policies in Vietnam, but "to pray together, to think together, and if possible, to help restore peace in Vietnam

Miss Hatsue Nonomiya, the only woman member of the team, noted that she had met very few pacifists in the U.S., but that many university groups were supporting a peaceful solution to the Vietnam situation.

Prof. Mitsunori Yamaguchi reported that, as the average American was not swayed by ideological considerations, but rather, by pragmatic considerations, the team utilized the mass media as much as possible. He, also, believed that there was little effort toward peace being made by the U.S. government, but that many groups had registered opposition to the government's policies in Vietnam, especially student groups.

Mr. Sekikazu Nishimura expressed the belief that the majority of Americans don't understand their government's policies or attempt to defend them. He hoped that more contacts could be made with Christians in the U.S. so that they could work together to prevent a third World War.

Prof. Yoshiaki Iizaka, the fifth member of the team and recognized as probably the most articulate, voiced the conviction that there was a lack of knowledge of the actual situation in Vietnam by most Americans he had contacted in Japan prior to his visit to the U.S., and a lack of understanding of Asians and the movements in Asia today by Americans. He stated that it was his belief that the American policy toward Vietnam was basically a reflection of the American policy toward Red China and that the U.S. had "adopted a self-imposed ignorance about China" which was the result of the American's "moralistic attitude."

The following is a translation of the statement circulated before the meeting at the Ginza Church began:

We five Peace Mission Ambassadors, sent out by the Emergency Conference for Peace in Vietnam and Christians and churches connected to the Conference, with their earnest prayers and determination for peace, took off from Japan on July 20th and headed for New York. For the next three weeks until August 11th, we visited in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Indianapolis, Bloomington, Chicago and its vicinity.

In each of these cities we met Americans of differing social background, such as ecclesiastical leaders, government officials, various democratic peace organizations, university professors, persons related to mass communication, the general public, and the like. We presented to them the three major principles of the Vietnam Emergency Conference, and introduced our opinions on the Vietnamese war. We discussed, protested, and prayed.

American churches accepted our Peace Mission as a fruit of the witness and consecration of Japanese churches, welcomed us as their brothers who share in the One Lord, One Church, and One Faith, and expressed their thanks to us. Special mention must be made of the fact that they especially the National Christian Council, received their uninvited guests warmly, prepared itineraries, and provided